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**CROSS ROADS STORE** — Jim Freels, uncle of Bill Freels, Y-12, owned and operated this store in the Scarboro community. Other stores were owned by Hobart Brimer and Edgar Ford. Storekeepers in the valley often trade eggs, berries or almost anything for merchandise. If a surplus of eggs amassed, they graded or “candled” them and transported them to Knoxville. (A sad note is added to the Freels’ episode . . . Mr. Jim Freels died at the age of 90 last week.)

## An Historical View of Oak Ridge

### The Pre-Oak Ridge Communities and Katy’s Kitchen

Before the U.S. government acquired 59,000 East Tennessee acres in 1942 for the wartime Manhattan Project, four rural communities lay in the valley beside the Clinch River where Oak Ridge now stands. These communities—Wheat, Elza, Robertsville and Scarboro—all but disappeared when the government built what is now known as the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the Oak Ridge Y-12 Plant and the Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant, three energy research and development facilities operated today by Union Carbide Corporation’s Nuclear Division for the Department of Energy.

In 1975 and 1976, James A. Young, editor of the *Nuclear Division News*, brought these pre-Oak Ridge communities back to life in four articles written for *ND News*. Reprinted here, the articles tell of Oak Ridge’s predecessors—the people, times and places which moved on to make room for the post-World War II era.

In a fifth article, Ruby A. Miller, Nuclear Division public relations staff member, describes one of the mysterious installations which sprang up from the pastoral setting. Similar on the outside to surrounding farm buildings, “Katy’s Kitchen” was a far cry from the typical Scarboro barn.

# 'The land was sweet and good; and I did what I could'

by James A. Young

"When I first came to this land —  
I was not a wealthy man,  
Then I got myself a farm  
Called my farm — muscle in my arm;  
But the land was sweet and good  
And I did what I could."

And so the old ditty goes — "got myself a shack, called my shack — break my back;" "got myself a cow — no milk now;" "got myself a hen — no eggs again;" "got myself a wife — run for your life;" ... "but the land was sweet and good; and I did what I could."

He crossed the mountains in the mid-1840's to settle in the lush bottom-lands along the Clinch River, formerly called the Pellissippi by the Cherokees. The son of an Irish immigrant, fleeing the potato famine of 1820, he had taken part in the Indian expulsion of 1838 and was tired of military service. He sold his North Carolina holdings, given in part as a land grant for military service, and pushed westward with the other Irish, Scotch, English and German immigrants. The Clinch River looked good to Martin McCoy — and the

Welsh maiden down the river looked even better. Shortly after settling on his land in one of the hidden coves of the river (where the Clark Center Recreation Park is now located), he married Viame Peak and began to live out his long life as a Tennessee farmer.

Thus the story of Scarborough, the last of the series of pre-Oak Ridge communities, is told ... only multiplied manifold to relate the filling up of the sandy shores of the winding Clinch. Scarborough was named for three brothers — Jonathan, David and James — who came down from Virginia in the early 1800's. They were later joined by familiar names in the valley ... Peters, Keith and England. Later came Freels, Ford, Bailey, Lee, Ellis, Cross, Burgess, Johnson, Moore, Wilshire, Gorman, Taylor, McFarland, Robinson, Diggs, Brummitt, Kerr and Lockett families, and others.

## Old home restored

Scarboro, as it is now spelled, extended from the John Jones farm across the river from Edgemoor down the Clinch to Meltons' place near White Wing Bridge (the Meltons gave us the name Melton Hill Lake). Bethel Valley Road took up from Raccoon Valley Road and inched its way along the winding river. Scarboro, more than any of the other three areas of pre-Oak Ridge, resembles its old self. With the exception of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory complex, across the road from New Bethel Church, the valley looks as it may have 100 years ago. Some of the old homes still stand, as the Comparative Animal Research Laboratory of The University of Tennessee houses some of its employees in pre-Oak Ridge homes near the Oak Ridge Memorial Gardens. (The UT lab has actually reconstructed the old "Freels home"

inside the restricted area, and uses it for picnics and other outings.)

At the crossroads of Kerr Hollow Road and Bethel Valley stood traditionally the news source of early America, a small country store. Actually, there were three country stores in the valley, run by Hobart Brimer (or "Hob" as everyone called him), Jim Freels (who was one of the last persons to evacuate the land in late 1942, taking with him his gas pump and everything else he could pull up) and Edgar Ford.

Among the early settlers was one Captain John Harrell, who accompanied Washington in his famous crossing of the Delaware. His descendants are scattered throughout East Tennessee and the name Harrell is well-known in the area.

## Trade-outs at store

"We came to Scarboro in the mid-20's," writes one reader who now lives in Kentucky. "We picked berries for 10 cents a gallon and traded them at Brimer's for a yard of material, which also cost a dime. If there was nothing that met our fancy, Hob would give us a "due bill" which we could barter later when something did come along that we liked.

"Sunday school was at the Presbyterian Church, revivals at the Methodist Church and baptizings at New Hope and New Bethel Baptist Churches (actually using the cold waters of Bear Creek or East Fork for baptisteries). We loved to pick wild strawberries in the Spring and look for new nests among the vines and trees. The mountain air was pure and sweet."

## Scarboro School burned

The four churches in the area were the Cumberland Presbyterian, New Bethel Baptist, New Hope Baptist and Mt. Vernon Methodist. New Hope was located at East Portal near the Y-12 Plant, New Bethel still stands across Bethel Valley from ORNL, and Mt. Vernon was located in the woods near Building 9213, across Pine Ridge



**OLD FREELS HOME**— UT's Comparative Animal Research Laboratory owns one of the original cabins in this area, the old Freels home. The "double" cabin is separated by a stone chimney and has been reconstructed for picnics and lunches within CARL's area. (The site is restricted to the public.) Officials believe the home sits on its original site, near Freels Bend in the Clinch River.



**STILL STANDING** — The William Freels home still stands on Bethel Valley Road, occupied by Merrill Bird, a UT employee at CARL. The row of houses now occupied by CARL employees were not aligned in a row, as they are today, but some of them were moved to their present location.



**KERR HOME** — Lula Kerr Fox mans an axe with her niece, Bonnie, outside the old Kerr home which stood between the Winchester place and Bethel Valley Road. The Kerrs were descended from the Winchester, and their home was typical of the Scarboro community.

## Scarboro Community

from Y-12. New Hope and Mt. Vernon are now marked only by ancient cemeteries.

"The ice truck came through about twice a month and we would buy a block of 100 pounds to store in the basement. Then many Sundays we would make homemade ice cream and gather our friends in to eat it."

Scarboro Elementary School burned in the late 20's and was rebuilt with brick. (Part of the structure is still standing and is used by CARL as part of its administrative offices.) Another old cemetery dots the landscape behind CARL's office... known as the Scarboro cemetery where rest many of the founders of the community.

There was a raft at Solway and a ferry operated by the Lees up the river. The raft was powered by long poles and used only when the Clinch was low.

### River flooded land

Before the 1930's when Norris Dam was built, the Clinch overflowed every four or five years, giving farmers a new supply of rich top soil, fertilizing their land anew. In one of these floodings a giant Indian burial site was unearthed to be later studied by local anthropologists and archaeologists. Almost 200 remains were removed from the Bull Run Steam Plant site at Edgemoor, before the plant was built.

"There was plenty to keep us busy," writes our Kentucky resident, "we had hog-killings, quilting parties, corn-shuckings, all-day singings at the church, and so on. When a baby was born — two of my brothers were born in Scarboro — everybody came and pitched in to help with the chores. The only doctors were in Oliver Springs and Byington, across the river, so many of the babies were 'hand-delivered' by nannies and midwives.

"Those were happy times."

### Freels home occupied

Bill Freels, employee in Y-12's Laboratory Operations and

descended from the pioneer family, provided some of the photographs for this series and writes of his father: "He carried the mail — by buggy, by mule, by walking and later by auto — from Scarboro through the Robertsville community back across the mountain by the Oak Ridge Country Club, up Bear Creek Valley, then over the ridge to Bethel Valley by almost the same road we now use to go to ORNL, by Building 9213. From there he returned to the office... our home which still stands along Bethel Valley Road. Merrill Bird, of UT's CARL, now lives in that Freels home."

Freels Bend is the giant, horse-shoe-shaped flat-land that juts into the river just above the Carbide Park.

The residents of Scarboro were as unhappy as the settlers in Wheat, Robertsville and Elza upon leaving their farms and lands. But, as one of them said, "What do you do? The government needed your land to win the war. Who would have refused such a request as that?"

Martin and Viame Peak McCoy are buried at New Bethel, along with several of their daughters and their families. A memorial stands behind the church which reads "Erected in Memory of New Bethel Baptist Church, Opened 1851 Closed 1942... Church Building Stood 47 Feet in Front of this Stone."

### Church still stands

Little did the church fathers know then that the Corps of Engineers, the Clinton Engineer Works, the Atomic Energy Commission and later the Energy Research and Development Administration would have use for the small white church.

It still stands in Bethel Valley... once a haven for worshippers who shared their faith and used the place for social gatherings in those lean years when the church was their only means of contact with each other.

It stands also as a memorial to a band of settlers, happy in their own valley, who had to move and leave their beloved land.

This series of stories is dedicated to those hundreds who were scattered to other sections in the forced removal of 1942.



**NEW BETHEL** — One of the few churches in the pre-Oak Ridge site is New Bethel Baptist Church, founded in 1851. Leaders in the church voted to take the treasury and erect a monument to the church as their last official action. Early valley residents are buried in the cemetery behind the church. The church was a center of community activities in the valley a hundred years ago, the scene of homecomings, all-day singings and decoration days. Many memories are invoked by the little church in the valley. "It still stands there," one resident said, "as a reminder of our good past. Glad they left it for present residents of Oak Ridge to view."

# 'To bring them home sooner ... I'll gladly give up my land'

By JAMES A. YOUNG

(Second in a series covering the communities that made up the pre-Oak Ridge area. Others in the series will include Robertsville and Scarboro. Photos of communities are needed, and will be returned unharmed after use ... The editor.)

Elza, that little hamlet on the north side of Oak Ridge, which became the main entry into the Manhattan Project, got its name in a rather peculiar manner.

Paul M. Elza, assistant director for administration for Oak Ridge Associated Universities, relates the following, revealing how Elza got its name.

It seems the Louisville and Nashville Railroad was constructing a bridge across the Clinch River and an underpass near the Dossett community. Elza, a great-uncle of Paul, was construction engineer in charge of the undertaking. Lumber and other materials were marked "Elza" and a shed was built near the present underpass site with the name emblazoned on its side. Thus, railroad employees knew where to leave the materials.

There was never a post office at Elza ... residents received their mail at Dossett. There was a general grocery store at the crossroads (where River Road and the Turnpike intersect) for years, which was a gathering place for villagers in the old days.

The Elzas were Swiss-German woodworkers who migrated to the East Tennessee area early in the nineteenth century. They never actually lived in the Oak Ridge area, however, settling in Knoxville.

## Ridge boundaries

Many natives referred to the area as "Black Oak Ridge," which runs alongside the northern boundary of the area. Thus, the Manhattan Project was bounded on the north by the L & N Railroad, on the east and south by the Clinch River, and on the west and north by the ridge.

The 59,000 acres condemned by the U. S. Government in the summer of 1942 encompassed the land to be known as Oak Ridge. Ed Browder, a

Roane County industrialist and former resident of the Wheat area, received condemnation papers simply marked "Ed Browder, et al." He still has the historic document in his possession. Residents were given until the first of the year (1943) to vacate their land. Some 1,000 landowners (about 3,000 people) were quietly moved from the hollowed-out valley.

(It was July 1, 1942, that Army engineers visited the area and decided that the "Elza Area" would be a suitable site for the super secret wartime project, known then merely as S-1.)

## Worthington settlers

The valley was largely wooded with fertile farms along the valley and river, with relatively few families living on the 59-square-mile site. Many residents were on lands settled by their Scotch-Irish ancestors, handed down by three and four generations of farmers and trappers.

The Worthington Cemetery, which nestles in the bend of the river to the east of Elza, is the resting place for many of the area's earlier settlers. Birthdates on some of the stones go back into the 1700's, among them Garner, Leath, Worthington, Edmonds and Duncan names.

Directly across the Clinch River was the County "poor farm," where indigents from Anderson County spent their last days. Poor farms are only dots on the map these days, as cemeteries mark their locations of an era where poverty took its toll.

## Way of life

Squaredancing, pie suppers, and homecomings marked the social activities of the early residents, the church being the hub of it all. The country store also marked a gathering place where villagers congregated for the world news and community gossip. It was here also that small children brought eggs to barter for a piece of candy and pick up a spool of thread, or coffee or salt for the family board. Much of the food was grown by the residents themselves, and summer was a busy time when canning and storing away were a way of life.

A fascinating story of the prediction of "things to come" is told in George R. Robinson's book, "The Oak Ridge Story." It seems an old prophet from the Elza area, John Hendrix, had a vision after fasting for 40 days in the Black Oak wilderness.

There is actually little written of Hendrix's predictions, but word-of-mouth stories, told and re-told in the crossroads store, tell of great buildings and factories to be built in Bear Creek Valley (the present site of the Oak Ridge Y-12 Plant) that will "help in winning the greatest war that ever will be." Hendrix died in 1903 and his grave was marked a couple of years ago by enterprising Oak Ridge High School students. The simple handmade stone was replaced.



**OLD HOMESTEAD** — The Worthington home stood near Elza and was typical of structures in the area before Oak Ridge was founded. The stone-brick chimneys and cedar-shake roof were typical of houses in the Black Oak Ridge area. The fenced yard kept cattle from near the house.



**GATES OPEN WITH A BANG** — Elza Gate passes into non-existence in 1949 as the security was lessened to allow visitors into town for the first time. Symbolic of the right security, Elza Gate was the main entry into the Manhattan Project during the World War II.

Some 3,000 people were moved from the Oak Ridge area, and around the Elza section were the Crosses, Pyatts, Freels, Tadlocks, and Tunnells. (William Tunnell was the first settler to arrive in what is now Oak Ridge, settling in 1792.) Later came the Howards, the Freels, the Peaks, Lees and Garners. A member of the Garner family migrated on to Texas to sire John Nance Garner, former vice-president.

William C. Tunnell, in the Engineering Division at Y-12, is a direct descendant of the Virginian who came to East Tennessee a decade after the Nation's founding. Hilton A. Tunnell, whose name is pronounced "Tun' nel," as the subterranean passageway, believes he also came from that family tree. One of the old Tunnell ancestral homes stands near the Laurel and Marlow communities, just outside the Oak Ridge area.

## Country store

Copeland's store, which stood at the crossroads, was the center of the

Elza community. Many Copelands still exist in the area. A Copeland owned land to the east of Elza on Clinch River, which is now the site of Emory Heights. A Freels family owned river property along that way also. Many descendants and relatives of these families still live in the surrounding areas.

One of the residents was quoted as saying, "I was born in the house my grandfather built back in 1846 (when the United States and Mexico began war). This is mighty pretty country around here — the Great Smoky Mountains to the east and the Cumberland Mountains to the west. Don't blame my grandfather a bit for settling here.

"All the folks in these parts were farmers. They worked the ground and minded their own business, peaceful folks living a simple life. Of course, the Civil War came along, we sent a few of our boys out to fight. And then in World War I we did our share. But



**PIONEER BLOOD** — William C. Tunnell, a long-time Y-12 employee, is directly descended from another William Tunnell who migrated from Virginia to settle in the Black Oak Ridge valley in 1792.

# 'The voice of God mingling with the melody of nature'

By James A. Young



**AREA RESIDENCE** — The Winchester home, located on Kerr Valley Road, where The University of Tennessee Arboretum now sits, was not typical of the Robertsville homes. Most of the houses were two-storied, frame structures similar to those now on Bethel Valley Road near Oak Ridge Memorial Gardens. Those homes, relics of the past, were more typical of the area. Actually all were pre-Oak Ridge structures, some of them having been moved to their present locations.

## The Robertsville story

a pretty girl to walk home, found many of their life companions along this route."

Although farming was the chief occupation in the area, some of the men worked in the coal mines on the Cumberland Mountains, getting home about every two weeks for visits with their families.

A typhoid epidemic hit the community in the early 1900s, taking a toll in life from both young and old. The area's cemeteries shelter many of these victims, along with earlier victims of "consumption," the area's dreaded name for tuberculosis.

### Peaceful people

"Crime was almost unknown in the valley," relates Harley Law, a Y-12 employee who grew up in Robertsville. "The folks were too busy making a living to get into anything like that. We never locked our doors, even when we were away from home. There wasn't any reason to. These people were good, God-fearing people, who minded their own business, unless a neighbor got in trouble with illness or a burned-down barn or

something. Then his problems became their own."

The present Robertsville Junior High School still uses the old auditorium as a gymnasium. Nearby rests Collins Roberts, many of his descendants and other of these kind people.

"As in Robertsville, they quickly made new friends and were soon about their usual way of helping others," writes Grace Crawford, another Robertsville native, in relating the story of a relative. "But the family circle before Oak Ridge had been broken and could never be the same again. Many letters were exchanged from place to place for a while, but as time passed they became less frequent and people lost touch with their neighbors and friends of yesteryear. If you would ask each family that left this little spot of earth they now call the Great Atomic City of Oak Ridge, they would tell you that before Oak Ridge it was not a little 'spot of earth,' it was a 'littlespot of Heaven.'"

What is now the Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant was once the heart of a peaceful rural area known as Wheat, with roots going back almost 200 years. (Wheat took its name from a Frank Wheat, who served as the village's first postmaster.)

A grist mill is known to have existed on the East Fork of Poplar Creek when Tennessee was still part of North Carolina. The Volunteer State became the 16th state in 1796. Walker's Mill was built where the East Fork empties into Poplar Creek, near the present site of ORGDP.

Sparsely-written history of the area shows a Methodist Church founded by Gabriel and Richard Richards (believed to be brothers) existing in the very early days of settlement. Mt. Zion Baptist Church was founded in the early 1850's and Cumberland Presbyterian Church followed, along with the George Jones Memorial Baptist Church (the only structure left in the group).

### Covers ORGDP

Also located in the area at the time of the 1942 condemnation proceedings were the East Fork Masonic Lodge, Robinson's School, Wheat High School, formerly Roane County College (which, itself, was pre-dated by the Poplar Creek Seminary), Adams' Store and post office, and scores of clapboard homes and log cabins dotting the Gallaher Bend area. A ferry existed there, at the present Gallaher Bridge site, up until the late 1930's. Roughly, the Wheat area encompassed all of the present ORGDP site with out-lying perimeters extending upstream and downstream on the Clinch River. The river became part of Watts Bar Lake shortly before construction began at ORGDP.

There were familiar names in the area, many of which are still in evidence in Roane and Anderson

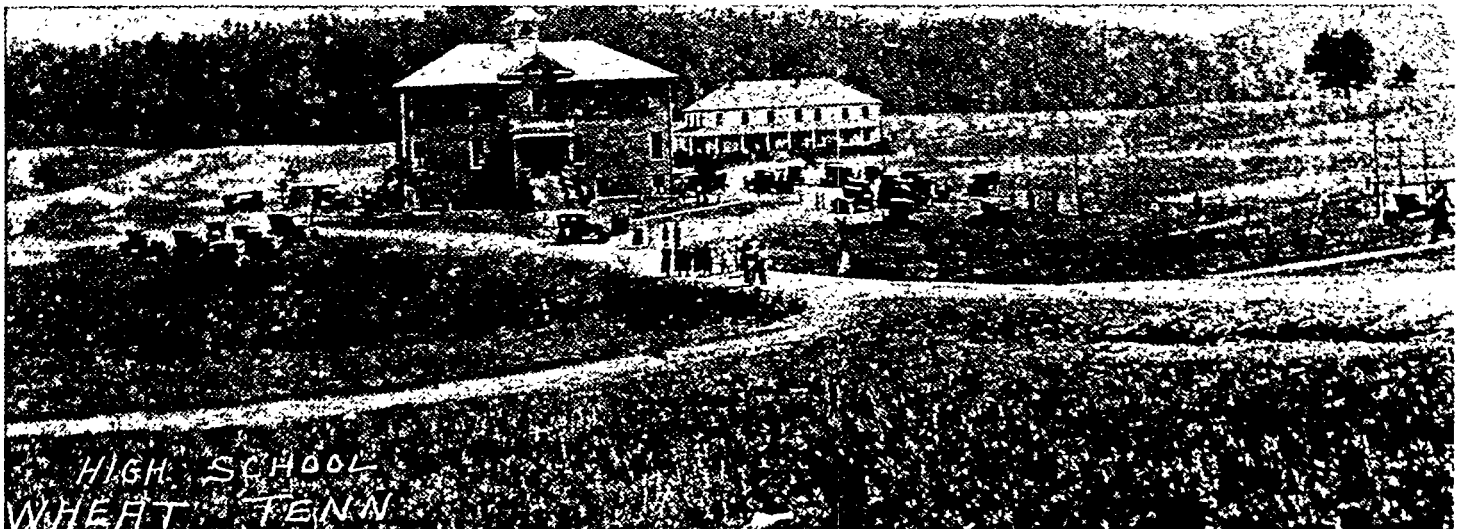
counties . . . Gallaher, Hembree, Harvey, Cross, McKinney, Lockett Black, Grubbs, Edwards, Cooper Williams, Roberts, Freels, Driskill and Wright. Some of these people are still around, and many descendants and kin can be found working in any of the four Nuclear Division plants.

Most of the residents farmed the area . . . tobacco, corn and truck patches. The people there were industrious and hard-working, laying away stores for the winter months. Cash came from selling produce and a few cattle and pigs were raised in the valley. Well-stocked basements and root cellars abounded in the section and one of the favorite pastimes of the housewife in Wheat was bragging about how many cans of berries, beans, pickles, peaches, etc., she had canned in the past season.

From the time Wheat High graduated its first student, Allee Cross, in 1911, until 1942 when 12 graduates



**SIMPLE MARKER** — A simple marker identifies the locale of the Crawford Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the site of Poplar Creek Seminary, Roane College and Wheat High School . . . all that is left of a bustling, thriving, rural area.



**REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST** — A backward look at the Wheat area shows a busy day in April, 1924, at the Wheat High School. The girls' dormitory is to the right of the school. The Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant is

located about one mile west of the site of the old high school. The area is now covered by dense woods with no recognizable landmarks. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Rhea Hester.)





**ANCIENT PHOTOGRAPH** — Poplar Creek Seminary, predecessor of Roane County College, which eventually became Wheat High School, is seen in this vintage photo. The unidentified young lady apparently waves from an abandoned structure, since many of the window panes are missing. Also the lawn stands in bad repair. (Photo: Courtesy of Mable Thornton.)

## Wheat community

went out into the adult world . . . a total of 303 diplomas was granted from the school. Education was high on family priority lists in those days, despite hard times and hard work. Among the graduates of the last class was Joy Edwards, one of six children of C. Elmer Edwards. Edwards, who worked at ORGDP from 1944 until 1958, saw all six of his offsprings with college degrees, four with advanced ones! Most of this accomplishment was on farm income, too, with Mrs. Edwards working part of the time in Harriman. "It wasn't easy," she states, "but the children all helped, coming home on weekends and pitching in to work the farm."

### Sold in 1908

Roane College, which preceeded Wheat High School, was chartered in 1885 with George Jones, A.J. Burum, James W. Watson, J.F. Browder, D.W. Gallaher and W.L. Gallaher acting as the school's founders. The school's property was sold to Roane County in 1908.

A 1902-3 graduation exercise program shows an interesting array of music and orations. William Christenberry gave a speech on "Adversity Polishes the Jewel," and Myrtle Holloway sang "Sweet Rose of Yesterday." Sallie Belle Arnold recited "The Death Bridge of the Tay," and Mamie Adams did "The Guardian Angel." Belle Eblen read an essay entitled "The Maid of Orleans," and Charles Zwicker orated on "There is a Divinity that Shapes Our Ends."

Records are unavailable on the founding of Poplar Creek Seminary, which preceeded the college, but it was known to exist shortly after the Civil War.

### Jones' contributions

George Jones, for whom the church is named, was born in the area in 1830, served in the Union Army during the Civil War, and is buried at the church with his wife. According to "Tennessee Pioneer Ministers," Jones was an exceptional man. "For ac-

executive ability he outclasses most of his brethren. Prosperity seems to follow his steps and fortune smiles upon whatever he turns his attention to or touches. He is broad-minded and progressive in his ideas and plans. He has no children, but is interested in the education of the youth. He has contributed many hundreds of dollars out of his limited and hard-earned means to the founding and support of Roane College, an institution which may be justly considered his own legitimate offspring.

"Jones' generous contributions to various public enterprises, religious and educational, have so nearly exhausted his humble fortune it is very doubtful whether he has enough left to guarantee him a comfortable maintenance during his declining years. Yet he withholds not his hands from giving . . . a tiller of the soil, pious, zealous, liberal with his means - may his tribe increase! -- is one of God's noblemen, satisfied only to live in the country, where he ever recognizes the voice of God mingling with the melody of nature."

### Known graduates

Known graduates of Wheat High School still at work with Union Carbide include Woodrow Johnson, Kenneth Johnson, Marjorie Cabbage (married name unknown), Orville Freels, Rhea Hester, Hoyt Matthews and Leonard Crow. Apologies to those that are missed through incomplete records.

The road west from Oak Ridge, once passed by the George Jones Church, with the High School on the south side. The Turnpike has been en-routed and now passes south of the old Wheat High School location. A gated road enters Blair, just east of the ORGDP plant.

Special thanks to Mrs. Rhea Hester, a graduate of Wheat, who loaned the News the vintage picture of Wheat High School, and to Mable Thornton, a former Y-12er, who loaned much of the historical data necessary for preparing this article.



**ALL THAT REMAINS** — All that is left of the Wheat Community is the George Jones Memorial Baptist Church, standing as it has for the past several decades. Wheat residents, and descendants relatives gather the first Sunday in October every year for decorating the graves.



**AMPLE CELLAR** — Aesop's fable of the ant and the grasshopper was familiar to residents of the Wheat area, as they gleaned food during the summer months for the onslaught of winter. This well-stocked cellar was typical of homes in the area, where the Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant now stands. The unidentified youth proudly surveys the family stock.



**TYPICAL HOME** — A neatly constructed log cabin dots the landscape in 1938 at Wheat, four years before U.S. surveyors came in and measured land in Anderson and Roane County that was to become Oak Ridge. The three ears of corn hanging on the porch were typical "good luck" talismans of the region.



**PASTORAL SCENE** — A pre-Oak Ridge photograph shows what the Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant area looked like more than 40 years ago, as sheep and their shepherd enjoy the summer sun. Almost Biblical in its context, the illustration shows the rolling terrain of the area, still in evidence

# Katy's Kitchen was 'super secret' storage facility

by Ruby A. Miller

There have been many stories told of a facility which dwells in the woods of the area between ORNL and Y-12. This facility is best known as "Katy's Kitchen." Hopefully, this article will clear up some of the misconceptions, and disclose the true story of what Katy's Kitchen was and is.

In the fall of 1947, a young draftsman in the department of public works of the newly organized Atomic Energy Commission in Oak Ridge was asked to work on a special project. The draftsman, Luther Agee, who still works for AEC-ORO, was told that he was to design a "secret" facility according to specifications, but he was never told what the facility would be used for. He was instructed to discuss this project with no one.

## Facility described

Agee's design included a concrete building which was partially underground, a barn-type structure and a farm silo. The idea was to camouflage the facility so that it could not be distinguished from the other old farms which dotted the area.

The outer walls of the building were of 12-inch-thick reinforced concrete. The building contained a long room which was designed so that a truck could be driven into it, a pump room, and a "room within a room." This innerroom was of standard bank vault construction, with 18-inch-thick walls, ceiling and floor. It was a vault in every sense of the word. It had the heavy combination-lock

The barn was used to cover the outside entrance to the building, which was actually built into the side of a hill. The barn was a plain wooden structure with large swinging doors. It was designed to fit on the hill and down over the entrance to the building. From the ground it looked a little funny, if one bothered to look closely enough. But from the air it looked like an ordinary barn.

## Silo adds authenticity

To add to the authenticity of the scene, the farm silo was built on the left side of the barn. The walls of the silo were of reinforced, 96-inch concrete pipes stacked one on the other, and

surrounded by wooded staves. Rusted metal bands held the staves in place. The top of the silo was used as a watch tower for the guards. It was constructed of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick armor-plated metal and bullet-proof glass.

Construction of the facility was completed in the spring of 1948. William T. Sergeant, chief of AEC-ORO's Security Division, said the facility was known - but only by a few - as "Installation Dog." Sergeant headed the AEC's Security Patrol which was in charge of protecting the facility.

## Alarm systems

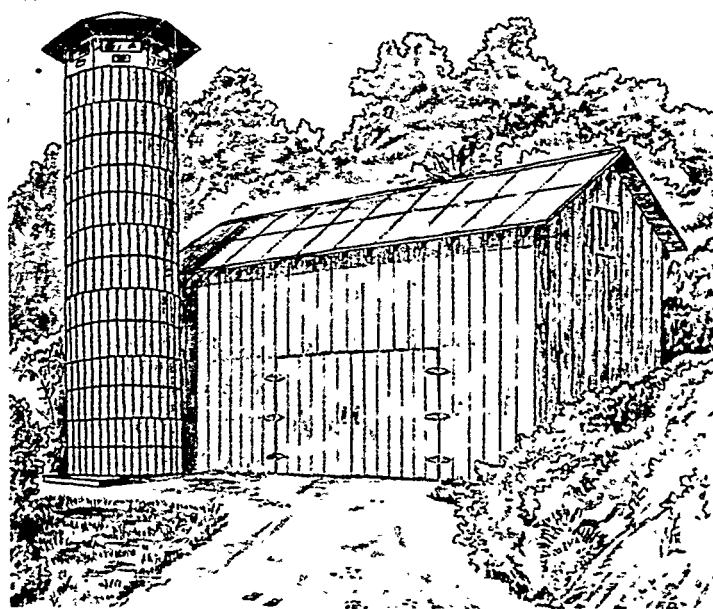
The entire area was surrounded by a GI combat-type barbed wire fence, and was rigged with a very elaborate alarm system. The alarm panels and controls were located in the Y-12 area, and responses were sent out from there. A series of codes had to be used in order to gain entrance to and exit from the area. Howard E. Rosser, who was a guard in the Security Patrol, recalls several occasions when the alarms were set off by foxes or other animals in the woods.

Sergeant explained that there were two main reasons why such elaborate security precautions were taken and why so few people knew the facility existed: ORGDP was the only facility engaged in the production of U-235, which made it very valuable, and the United States was the only country with a nuclear weapon at that time.

## Original purpose

Installation Dog served as a temporary storage facility for enriched uranium after it was processed at Y-12, and before it was shipped to the weapons site. The uranium was taken to and from the facility by truck. No people actually worked in the building, except to unload and load the trucks. The only personnel present at the facility at all times were the two security guards.

Sergeant said that no one was allowed into the area unless authorized. Agee and the other personnel involved in the design, construction or maintenance of the facility had to undergo periodic polygraph tests to determine how much they



**INSTALLATION DOG** — The sketch represents how the original facility must have looked when it was used as a "top secret" storage bunker. (The sketch was prepared by ORNL Graphic Arts personnel consulting with Luther Agee, designer of the original facility.)

knew and if they had discussed it with anyone else.

Installation Dog was only in use from May, 1948, to May, 1949, but was kept under guard for several years in case the need for it arose again.

## How "Katy" got name

In 1957, the Analytical Chemistry Division at ORNL acquired the facility from AEC to be used as a low-level counting laboratory. The isolated location of the building and the shielded walls made it perfect for such use.

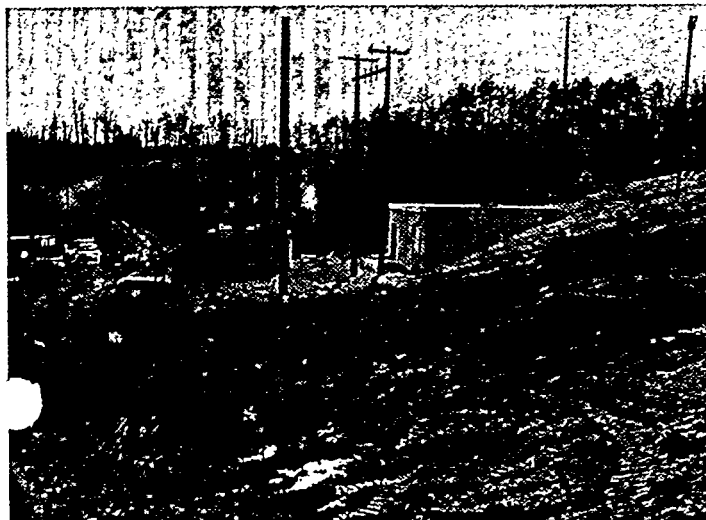
According to Larry T. Corbin, this is when the facility came to be known as Katy's Kitchen. Katherine Odom, who was secretary to Myron Kelley, the director of Analytical Chemistry, visited the facility several times after the low-level counting group moved in. She often had

lunch there and it was decided by all concerned that "Katy's Kitchen," would be an appropriate name. Mrs. Odom's husband, Clyde, still works at ORNL.

## Walker Branch Watershed

Katy's Kitchen is now used as a laboratory for the Walker Branch Watershed studies by the Environmental Sciences Division at ORNL. Gray S. Henderson is director of the Walker Branch Watershed project, and Tom Grizzard is in charge of the facility. The objective of the study, as described by Henderson, is to investigate biogeochemical cycles of forested landscapes with emphasis on the interactions between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

The present facility represents a big change from the original "Installation



**BEFORE** — Building 9213 was used to store enriched uranium before Katy's Kitchen was built in 1948. This building was heavily guarded, but was never camouflaged.



**AFTER** — Building 9213 is now the site of the Critical Experiments Facility. The present structure was built over the original facility. The vault and other rooms of the old building are used for storing materials.

# Katy's Kitchen facility

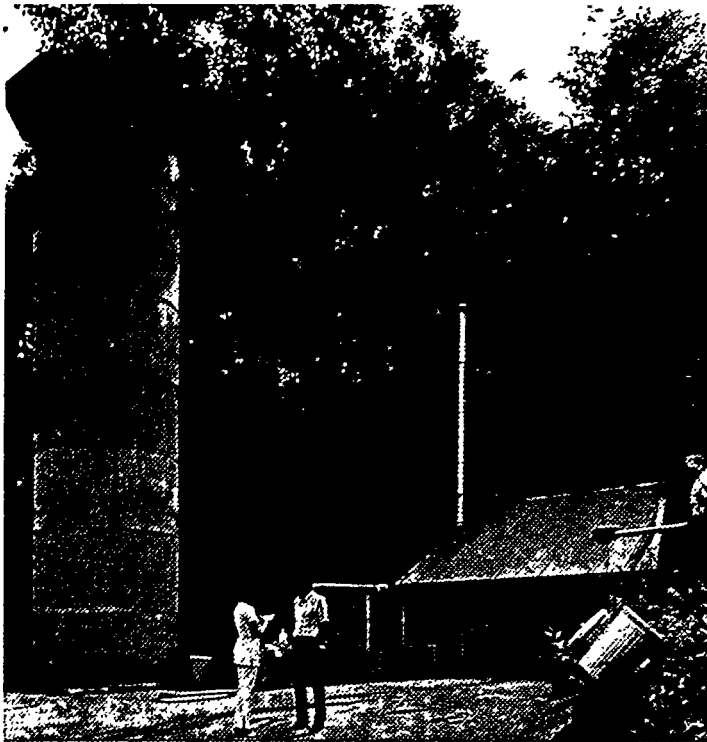
Dog." The barn structure has been removed; the long room into which trucks drove is an experimental laboratory, and the vault is used as an office. Even the building number has been changed. What used to be the "unknown" Building 9214, is now Building 0907.

## Katy's older sister

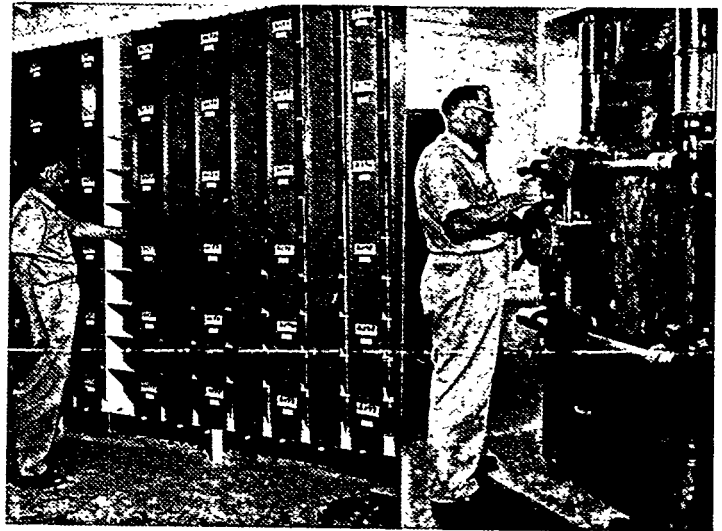
While attempting to find out the facts about Katy's Kitchen, another facility, which could be called Katy's older sister was discovered. This facility, Building 9213, was constructed in 1946 and was used for the storage of uranium until Katy's Kitchen was built. The two facilities are very much alike, in fact, Agee was taken to Building 9213, so that he could get ideas for designing Katy's Kitchen. This building was also built of reinforced concrete and had a "room within a room," of bank vault construction. Build-

ing 9213 was never camouflaged, but was heavily guarded. The Corps of Engineers was in charge of protecting the building, and its alarm system was tied into the Oak Ridge Police Department.

After Katy's Kitchen took over its function, Building 9213 became the site of what is now the Critical Experiments Facility. The original building is still intact and exists as part of the Critical Facility. The vault is used for storage. Dixon Callihan, director of the Critical Experiments Facility, supervised construction of the present facility in 1949. It is used to conduct critical experiments which entail accumulation of fissile and other materials of interest. Information gathered at the Facility is used in developing conceptual design for nuclear reactors, in determining safety standards for handling and processing fissile materials and for basic criticality research.



**KATY'S KITCHEN TODAY** — The barn-like structure has been removed and the entrance to the original building can be seen to the right. The farm silo remains intact, except for the wooden staves which have been removed. What was once the watch tower at the top of the silo is now a giant bee hive.



**VAULT STILL USED** — Johnnie J. Lynn, a 9213 building staff member from the Development Division at Y-12, is shown inside the vault with his hand on one of the original storage shelves. To the right, Lynn opens the heavy bank vault door.